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NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1875.—TRIPLE SHEET.

THE SUSQUEHANNA FLOOD.

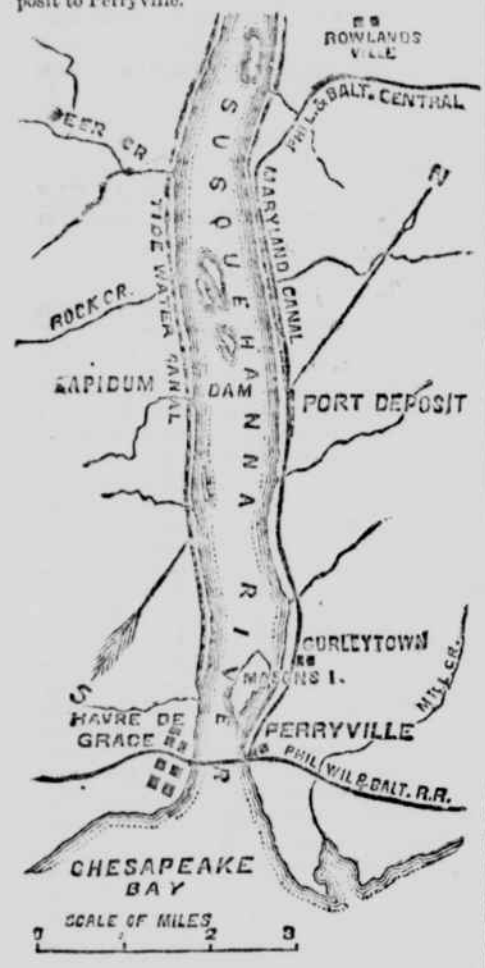
PORT DEPOSIT INUNDED.

UNEXPECTED AND RAPID RISE OF THE RIVER—CONSTRUCTION OF THE PEOPLE—STREETS AND HOUSES FLOODED—AND COMMUNICATION CUT OFF—ESTIMATE OF LOSSES—THE WATER FALLING. (FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.)

PERRYVILLE, Md., March 19.—The lower part of Port Deposit is still flooded, though the water is falling. The town is built at the base of a high granite bluff, and the houses extend along the Susquehanna River for over two miles. Through the town runs a main street, both sides of which are closely built up with dwellings, stores, and churches. Through this street the water this evening ran like a mill race, the depth varying from three to seven feet. The current was so swift that a strong man could not swim a boat against it. The cellars and first floors of the houses on both sides of the main street were flooded, but the water was deeper on the side toward the river. The inhabitants were driven from their dwellings to the houses of their more fortunate neighbors who lived upon the hill. Many were taken off in boats; others waded waist deep through the water. A party who had given up their rooms to the women are bivouacking on the side hill, where a huge fire has been built. The lumber interest—the chief business of Port Deposit—has been badly crippled. All the wharves are submerged, the huge piles of lumber along the water front have been tossed about in all directions, and a large portion has drifted down the bay. Some of the merchants hardly saved their books and papers.

Davis & Pugh, one of the largest lumber firms, estimate the losses of those in that business alone at \$200,000. The amount of furniture and other property carries the loss up to over \$300,000.

At 8 o'clock this evening measurements showed a fall of from 4 to 12 feet along the line from Port Deposit to Perryville.



Trusted citizens of Port Deposit give the following description of the flood: We had no fears of trouble at dark last night, though the ice was running down the river very rapidly. The ice grew thicker and thicker, and its velocity and momentum seemed to increase every moment. There had been no ice here this year as there was in 1873, and the river was clear, except a little floating ice. About 6:30 p. m. a schooner began to drag, and in spite of strenuous exertions, was carried down the river until she grounded. The town was then believed to be in no danger; but the awful roar of the ice filled many with considerable apprehension. At 7:20 it was noticed that the velocity of the ice was decreasing, while the masses that kept coming down grew larger and larger. Then we knew that a mass of the ice had grounded.

There is a long shoal seven miles below Port Deposit, called Penny Shoal. It was upon this shoal that the advancing glacier had lodged. The ice piled up in front of the town, and the water began to rise with great rapidity. The word was passed from door to door, and the scene that followed is almost indescribable. The loud roar and booming of the masses of ice, as they were piled upon each other with great force, was mingled with the crashing and fall of lumber and the smashing of ice cakes against wharves and buildings, the whole making an uproar whose sound reverberated through the hills for miles. It was like a thunder storm at Niagara. Strong men with pallid faces ran from their dwellings with their children in their arms. Women nearly fainting with terror plunged knee-deep in the raging flood and hurried toward higher ground. Confusion and disorder reigned. After the children, the sick and feeble were taken to places of safety, the men thought of their valuables exposed to destruction. Many waded waist-deep through the icy water, and, chilled to their bones, were compelled to give up the attempted rescue. Others scrambled upon the roofs of the houses, and, clinging to the eaves, they saved their books and papers. Men cool under ordinary difficulties grasped and wrung each other's hands in silence more eloquent than words.

TELEGRAPHIC AND RAILWAY COMMUNICATION CUT OFF.

The water continued to rise. The operator in the telegraph office was obliged to jump from his office window into a boat, leaving his instruments submerged. The railroad from Perryville to Port Deposit was flooded and covered with piles of ice, effectually cutting off all communication. There was no way of going from one part of the town to another except over the steep bluff. No one could form any conception of the result, or say how great would be the loss of life and property. Luckily, the inhabitants were warned early in the evening. If the crash had come after the people had retired, no one can predict how great the loss of life would have been. Two houses near the upper end of the town were overturned and broken in pieces. It is reported that one man lost his life, having been knocked down by the ice and drowned, but his name has not been ascertained. The post-office was partly submerged, and the post-master forced to throw what mail matter he could into a boat and escape. Not a person slept last night, and knots of men gathered on the higher ground watching the progress of the flood and the light of lanterns that marked the fitting boats. Port Deposit never before saw such devastation.

THE SITUATION LAST NIGHT.

The river for a mile above the town was clear at 9 o'clock this evening. The ice stretches down the river, filling the water far out into the bay. Fears were entertained that the splendid railroad bridge at Havre de Grace would be swept away. The ice at one time reached nearly to the top of the piers, but the goring at Penny Shoal relieved the pressure,

and before the tide turned the river began to fall. The people at Perryville were up all night last night watching their property. Large quantities of lumber and articles of many kinds were mingled with the ice in the river. Unless there is a heavy flood from above before the ice has a chance to move with the ebbing tide, there is believed to be no danger of any further extensive damage. The accounts received up to 10 o'clock from up the river report the water subsiding. There was a clear sunset, and the temperature is moderate.

ON THE NORTH BRANCH.

THE INUNDATION OF PITTSBURGH—THREE BRIDGES CARRIED AWAY—THE GORGE AT WILKESBARRE—CHANGE OF THE RIVER COURSE—KINGSTON OVERFLOWED—FLOODS IN THE PAST—SERIOUS APPREHENSIONS OF FURTHER DAMAGE.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.)

WILKESBARRE, Penn., March 19.—Following the example of its sister stream, the Delaware, the Susquehanna River has broken up this Spring with heavy floods, and has formed extensive ice gorges. Like the Delaware, the Susquehanna has its sources, and runs for hundreds of miles among ranges of steep hills and mountains, which during the past Winter were covered with snow from four to ten feet deep. The recent thaw and heavy rains have converted this immense body of snow into water, which has poured down the mountains and into the river, until its ice-clogged channel could no longer contain the swollen waters, and they have overflowed the low banks and inundated the fertile valleys on both sides. The most disastrous flood occurred at Pittsburg, nine miles above here, at the head of Wyoming Valley on last Tuesday, when the ice broke up in the night and gorged below Pittsburg, inundating that village and sweeping away the iron bridge of the Lackawanna and Bloomsburg Railroad, worth \$120,000, and two wooden highway bridges—one an old covered structure, worth \$20,000, and the other a new bridge, built in 1874 at a cost of \$90,000. Two men were carried away on the railroad bridge when it went down, but were rescued after drifting two or three miles down the river. Opposite Pittsburg, on the west side of the river, as West Pittsburg, where many of the business men of the former town reside. A large number of these, thinking the bridges safe, had crossed over to Pittsburg, and were cut off from all communication with their homes. The Lehigh Valley Railroad, running close to the river bank at Pittsburg, was overflowed for a distance of three miles, and great masses of ice were left on the track, which have not yet been removed, so that trains cannot run between Wilkesbarre and Pittsburg.



CHANGE OF THE RIVER'S COURSE.

About six miles above Wilkesbarre, near the village of Wyoming, the scene of the Wyoming massacre, the Susquehanna bends suddenly to the left and after running a mile in that direction it again resumes its regular south-westerly course, continuing so until it reaches a point a mile below this city, where it abruptly turns to the right again, running in a westerly direction for two miles, when it changes its course for the fourth time and runs toward the south-west. This makes the course of the river opposite Wilkesbarre in shape like the new moon, the village of Kingston lying in the low valley inside the crescent, opposite this city. In the bend below here are two small islands, called respectively Fisk's and Park's Islands, and upon these the lower end of the gorge rests, the upper end being above the first bend in the river near Wyoming. Just at the elbow of that bend, on the west side of the river, stands the little post village of Forty Fort, the site of the stockade occupied by the American soldiers at the time of the Wyoming massacre. A mile below, and three miles above Wilkesbarre, but on the opposite side of the river, is a small cemetery, containing many very old graves, which is called Forty Fort Cemetery. When the gorge formed, the river, then much swollen, finding its channel choked up with a solid barrier of ice, broke across the flats between the horns of the crescent, before described, overflowed this cemetery, and inundated the village of Kingston, and the farming lands around it, sweeping off fences, and flooding the lower floors and cellars of many houses. Since the river has fallen it has continued to flow principally in this new channel, and it is thought that if the gorge does not give way, the river will form for itself a permanent channel across the Kingston flats, abandoning its old tortuous course, and leaving the City of Wilkesbarre three-quarters of a mile away from the Susquehanna, instead of standing on its bank as it now does. The three bridges swept away at Kingston Tuesday night are now imbedded immovably in the gorge, near the center of the river, below Forty Fort, and if the ice should break up, bearing them along with it, they would sweep off the bridge here, even if the ice should spare it. For this reason the bridge company of this place yesterday obtained permission from the owners of the Pittsburg bridges to burn them as they lie in the ice.

THE GORGE AT WILKESBARRE.

The gorge gave way about 1:30 a. m. on Wednesday, and swept down the river. When it arrived oppo-

site this city the ice again became clogged, forming another gorge five miles long, completely filling the space between the river banks, and reaching the wood-work of the covered highway bridge, which is 20 feet above low water. A street railway crosses the bridge to Kingston, a little village on the opposite side of the river. This has stopped running, and the bridge is thought to be doomed to destruction. It is 43 years old, but has been rebuilt within a few years at a cost of \$35,000. It is of wood, with a shingled roof, and is 200 feet long. It is supported on five heavy stone piers. The water backed up when the gorge was formed here, and overflowed the lower part of this city, filling the cellars on River-st., which runs parallel with the river bank, and inundating the gas-works, but causing more inconvenience than damage, as no ice came over the banks. For several nights there has been very little gas burned, most of the street lamps being extinguished, and lamps and candles have to be used in the hotels, business places, and residences.

THE SITUATION LAST NIGHT.

There has been no change in the condition of the ice gorge at this place to-day. The river, which runs principally over the Kingston flats, has fallen three or four feet since Tuesday. The ice remains piled up from 20 to 30 feet high in some places and touching the highway bridge here, over which none but foot passengers are allowed to pass. Between Kingston and the other end of the bridge the principal current of the river is now running, so that there is no communication with that town. Many of the houses there are still flooded. In this city no gas is yet used. To-day the trains of the Lackawanna and Bloomsburg Railroad, whose bridge was swept away on Tuesday at Pittsburg, began running across the bridge of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Railway, three miles below here, and reached this city via South Wilkesbarre, where they ran on the track of the Lehigh Valley Road. The Harrisburg and other Southern mails now come through by this route. To-day telegraphic communication was re-established between Wilkesbarre, Pittsburg and Tunkhannock, and all other places up the river. This removes the danger that no notice would be received here of the starting of the gorges above Pittsburg. The Wilkesbarre Bridge Company this afternoon sent men to burn the Pittsburg bridges lying in the gorge three miles above here. They were saturated with benzine and set on fire, and to-night the sky in the north is lighted up with the blaze. The trains were removed from the new wooden bridge before it was fired, and the iron railroad bridge will be taken to pieces. It is thought that this measure may save the bridge here from being swept away when the gorge moves. The Pennsylvania and New-York Division of the Lehigh Valley Railroad was to-day cleared of the ice which covered it to a depth of from 6 to 14 feet, above Pittsburg, and to-morrow two passenger trains will be run each way between Waverly and Pittsburg, and all trains on Monday. In places the ice on each side of the track cleared is wallled up as high as the cars. Three hundred men are employed, and the Company expect to have the track cleared between here and Pittsburg by Tuesday or Wednesday. Communication is now established between Pittsburg and West Pittsburg by means of row-boats.

A NINE MILE GORGE.

Two miles above Pittsburg, at a bend in the river, another great gorge of ice begins and extends in an unbroken mass from 5 to 20 feet deep, and occupying the whole space between the banks up as far as Pittsburg, a distance of nine miles. The river, which has fallen several feet, runs under this gorge nearly its whole length. The ice forming it is more solid and heavy than any that has yet come down. Above it there is a collection of drift ice two miles long, which has come down within the last two days. This great gorge causes intense alarm in West Pittsburg, which would be entirely swept away if it should come down with a flood. To-day there was a rumor in Pittsburg that the ice had started, and great excitement prevailed until it was found that it was only drift ice coming over the falls.

THE GORGE AT OWEGO.

The river is open for 100 miles above the Pittsburg gorge, but at Big Island, near Owego, there is another gorge with 100 miles of ice behind it. This gorge, which will soon have to open down the river, is caused by the feeder-dam of the Chesapeake Canal, and is composed, river men say, of the heaviest ice in the Susquehanna. At Owego, four miles above Pittsburg, the ice is 25 feet above low-watermark.

APPREHENSIONS OF DANGER.

It is probable that the gorge above Pittsburg will move before the one here, and if so it will block up the Kingston flats, which now give vent to the river opposite this city, and cause a flood unprecedented in the history of the valley. The bridge of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, three miles below here, worth \$90,000, will probably go when a flood comes, as well as the bridge of the New Jersey Central Railroad at Nanticoke, five miles farther down, which is worth \$75,000. At Nanticoke there is a large feeder-dam of the North Branch Canal which will be sure to cause a jam of the ice. A heavy storm is reported to be approaching from the west. At 9 p. m. snow began falling heavily. It bids fair to become rain before morning.

IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

INJURY TO THE BRIDGE AT COLUMBIA—CANAL BOATS CARRIED AWAY—HEAVY LOSS OF LUMBER—DAMAGE TO MILLS AND HOUSES.

COLUMBIA, Penn., March 19.—The Susquehanna is nearly clear of ice. This evening the mill-pond of T. S. Bletz was completely torn out and all his raft lost. His loss is estimated at \$15,000. The bridge was closed this morning to the passage of trains and heavy wagons, as it was deemed unsafe. One span of the bridge on the York County shore was badly injured, and the chords were knocked from under several others and carried off. Six or eight piers have also been injured, but to what extent cannot be told until the water lowers. The Pennsylvania Railroad and Collins's station for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company have at least nine or ten canal boats on their tracks, and also tons of old rubbish, outhouses, &c., &c. The ice is piled upon from five to fifteen feet on the tracks. They have a very large force of men clearing train tracks, but it will take several days before trains can pass, as a great part of their tracks have been completely turned over. The abutment of the Tidewater Canal Company, at Wrightsville, is badly injured and the basin gorged full of ice, canal boats and logs from bridge to dam. The winding bridge was raised off its abutments and carried about three hundred yards by the ice and landed on the berm bank of the canal, with one end laying over a canal boat. In Marietta the loss was very heavy by the lumbermen having their rafts, etc., swept away. Miller & Musser's saw-mill was entirely ruined by being crushed in. One canal-boat is lying against a large tree in front of a private residence, the tree being the only thing that saved the house from being stove in. Ice is piled up over the tow-path at some points from 25 to 30 feet high.

RAILBRIDGE OVERFLOWED—A CORN WAREHOUSE.

RAILROAD STATION, AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE WASHED AWAY—NARROW ESCAPES—PROBABLE LOSS OF LIFE.

HARRISBURG, Penn., March 19.—A Western Union line repairer returned here from Bainbridge at an early hour this morning and reports a great amount of damage done by the ice and the high water yesterday in that vicinity. A warehouse containing 5,000 bushels of corn was swept away. The depot was forced across the track on the hill. The telegraph office was completely demolished. Four canal boats and a frame house were forced on the track, and six or seven houses badly

THE CANAL RING.

THE SWINDLING CONTRACTS AND THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

MILLIONS STOLEN FROM THE STATE. HOW FRAUDULENT BIDS ARE MADE—GOV. TILDEN'S ATTACK UPON THE RING—A REMARKABLE EXPOSURE.

We present below a full explanation of the system of Canal Ring frauds by means of unbalanced bids, described in our Albany correspondence yesterday, and print at the same time some specimen contracts which will make the process perfectly clear. The Message of Gov. Tilden, referring to the same subject, and suggesting the proper remedies, will be found on our second page. The Governor states that during the past five years the amount of tolls collected on the canals has exceeded \$15,000,000, while the cost of ordinary and extraordinary repairs and expenses has been so great that during the same period nearly \$15,000,000 additional has been raised for canal purposes by taxation. What has become of this enormous sum? The researches upon which our correspondents have been for some time engaged in Albany tell the whole story. The money has been made away with by the instrumentality of a system of contracts, the responsibility for which is shared by the contractors, engineers and commissioners. In some cases the matter is brought straight home to members of the Legislature. J. J. Belden, who is the assignee in bankruptcy of A. S. Page, Chairman of the Assembly Canal Committee, is one of the most important of the contractors. We give one of his contracts, in which he agreed to do certain work for \$35,584, and by means of unbalanced bids obtained \$222,619, and another in which he bid \$10,817 and has received \$49,923, the work still going on. His partner, Henry D. Denison, put in a bid of \$7,123 on a certain contract, and had received, on the 1st of last month, no less than \$258,112, and the work is still going on. Assemblyman Willard Johnson is the real owner of a contract nominally awarded to J. V. Boomer. It calls for \$2,871, and he had got, up to January, 1875, \$110,223. Willard Johnson owns another contract made in the name of C. J. De Gray; amount bid, \$23,431; amount paid, \$56,815. A son of Jarvis Lord got \$292,915 for work on which he bid \$45,800. N. L. Osborn has taken two contracts at absurd rates, and as yet there have been no returns from them, so that it is impossible to say how much the State will lose. A large number of other contracts are in our possession, and we shall continue the instructive exhibition.

SPECIMEN CONTRACTS.

THE SYSTEM OF UNBALANCED BIDS ILLUSTRATED.

A GREAT SCHEME OF FRAUD—SENATORS, ASSEMBLYMEN, ENGINEERS, AND COMMISSIONERS IMPLICATED.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.)

ALBANY, March 19.—It has never been fashionable to talk about canal frauds. The Canal Ring, which only breaks its judicious silence to deny its own being, has found reserve on this subject expedient and profitable. Neither papers nor politicians have discussed them, and they have continued for a number of years with that impunity which impudence exerts from ignorance. In fully disclosing this scheme of fraud, THE TRIBUNE does the State a service, which people familiar with canal history say no journal has ever rendered before. Politicians had such good reasons for silence, that Emerson E. Davis's speech in the Assembly last Winter is said to have been the first legislative analysis of the subject on record. Gov. Tilden's message is certainly the first of its kind, and is as commendable as it is plucky, in view of the influence of the clique he assails, and the enemies that its action on the Constitution bill excited in the dominant faction of the party. Such disclosures can hardly fail to convince the people of the State that the problem of cheap transportation cannot be made clear until they get rid of the thieves who are making of the canal sluices to drain the public money into their own pockets.

A little recapitulation of canal fraud methods may help to a proper understanding of the facts given below. It will be remembered that the chief expedient in these frauds is that of artificially unbalanced bids. The contractor bids for articles of which he expects to finish a large quantity at a high price, and in the small quantity, which, by a curious coincidence, is always named by the engineer who prepares the call. The product is therefore small, and the sum total of all the products of the proposal is also small. The honest bidder, who bids for the work at fair prices, is compelled to multiply the quantities large and small by proper prices. Some of the products of the honest bids are, therefore, larger and some smaller than those of the fraudulent bidder, but their sum total is much greater. In this way the contract goes to the lowest bidder, as the law requires, though almost invariably this reduced bidding is a mere trick, and the contract is seen to have been in reality awarded to the highest of all the bidders.

The responsibility for this is divided, or rather there is a series of responsibilities, beginning with the assistant engineers in charge of the work, and running through the Resident and Division Engineers to the Canal Commissioners. The first step in fraud is in the preparation of the specifications of work to be done. The manner in which these are generally arranged leaves no room for doubt as to the existence of collusion between engineers and contractors. Large quantities of material are called for on which the bidder places an entirely inadequate price, so as not to swell the total of his bid, and items of large expense are treated in a manner exactly the reverse, for the same evident purpose. No other inference than that of collusion is possible in such cases. When a man solemnly engages on paper to excavate solid rock at one cent a cubic yard and wants a double price for building a stone wall, it is of no use to put certificates of church membership in evidence. It goes without saying that the specification of work to be done is generally far from the truth, making the engineer an accomplice in the crime of the contractor. The next step is the change of the quantities in the specifications. Fortunately one safeguard has been thrown about these specifications—

a provision that no alteration shall be made in the prices after the contract has been let—but this merely adds to the shifts to which the contractor is compelled to resort, and furnishes, as has been seen, little protection to the tax-payers of the State. At this stage of this progress of peculation is seen one of the most glaring of the criminal absurdities of the present management of the canals. Instead of confining the power to make or accept alterations in contracts to the responsible head of that branch of the department having them in charge, as is the case in every railroad or large corporation, this important and ultimate duty is left to the assistant engineer, placed in charge of the work by the Resident Engineer, who is the subordinate of the Division Engineer, who in his turn is the subordinate of the Canal Commissioners, one of whom is placed in charge of each of the three Divisions of the Canal. The assistant engineer, in whose hands the disposition of the contracts therefore rests, is often the political creature of the contractor, whose work he is supposed to supervise, and is kept in subjection through fear of his political influence. The engineers, the old canal people say, do not generally share in the profits. The Canal Ring has all the avarice with none of the generosity of Tammany, and substitutes terrorism for largess. This is one of the motives which leads members of the Ring to seek political positions, which they can use to such peculiar advantage that leading members of the same firm of contractors have been glad to serve on the State Committees of opposite parties. The Resident Engineers are directly responsible for the way in which the assistant engineers perform their functions, and the Division Engineers are responsible for their subordinates, and responsible to the Commissioners. So that there are four successive stages at which a resolute honesty might put an end to this associated theft. That Commissioner Thayer, who deserves the tribute the Governor rendered him in his message to-day, has been the first Commissioner who has refused to accept unbalanced bids, is sufficient ground, with other related facts, for the inference that the Canal Ring is not a close corporation of contractors, but embraces engineers and officials of every grade as well as Canal Commissioners. That the latter charge has been generally believed is proved by the existence of frank charges that certain Canal Commissioners have in times past complied with the law which declares their positions forfeited in case they hold an interest in any contract or in material furnished for use in contracts, by assigning, but, it is alleged, secretly retaining their property in lumber-yards and quarries which were the depots of contract supplies.

It is with the Canal Commissioners that the final and heaviest responsibility rests. If some of them had set earlier the example which Mr. Thayer now affords, and held their position in spite of all the pressure of the Ring, such transactions as are detailed below would necessarily have come to an end. The attempt to defraud could be made ruinous instead of profitable, as it now is. If contractors who have offered these unbalanced bids were held to their contracts, in which they agree to furnish large quantities of certain items at very low prices, because they expect to be able to escape this requirement, a dishonest contract would result in bankruptcy or its abandonment, and honest contractors might become the order of the future.

It is an evil which has been apparently on the increase rather than on the decline. Many of the contracts of 1871 exhibit glaring inequalities, and, indeed, of the 143 contracts now pending it is asserted that fully nine-tenths are of this intentionally fraudulent character. Surely Gov. Tilden's message has not come a day too soon.

The contracts given below, as specimens of those which have become general within the last six or eight years, are interesting as much for what they represent as for what they are. They show the active though silent part which the Canal Ring plays in politics, and the prominence which its members attain. The order here is the direct counterpart of much Washington jobbery. They do not have contracts, because they are members of the Legislature; they are members because they have contracts and must look after their interests. They are placed in the Legislature to protect their fellow who are kept busy outside. Several of the contracts are held by members of the leading firm of J. J. Belden, one of whom is the assignee in bankruptcy, as well as the relative of the Chairman of the Canal Committee of the Assembly; two are held by Willard Johnson, one of the working politicians of the same House, and another is a curious transaction in which the son of Senator Jarvis Lord, chief of the Ring, is the principal figure. There are two distinct classes of contracts represented: first, contracts still pending, but on which payments have been made much in excess of the figure at which the contract was taken, showing that the original bid was not in good faith; second, contracts, such as these for the enlargement of the Champlain Canal, in which the figures in the successful bidders are generally only a fraction of the engineer's estimate of the cost of the work, thus showing at the first glance that something is wrong. This supposition receives curious confirmation in the fact that an engineer sent to report the condition of these particular contracts states that the contractor is getting ready to resort to the very device that one would infer from his contract that he had originally intended to adopt.

It is hardly possible to gain more than a fragmentary notion of the height, depth, and breadth of canal frauds without long experience and close observation. The main devices by which the contracts, which are given herewith, have become and are to become profitable, are, on the whole, simple and may be easily detected. But there are many artifices which no one but an old canal man can discover. There will be found contracts that seem fair and promising to the inexperienced eye, and are perhaps in most of their items honest contracts; but the man who is familiar with the natural history of canals, and who has made the shifts and tricks of contractors a study, will pounce at once upon some ineffectual item which the ordinary observer would never notice, and declare that there is the steal in that contract. It is a rule which knows no exception that this little item, destined to future increase, will be found joined to a big price. Very often, too, it is the diminutive contracts that will bear watching; they are by no means always innocuous because they are little. Their capacity of growth is sometimes amazing.

HENRY D. DENISON.

A CONTRACT INCREASED SEVENTEENFOLD.

No better example of the pettishness of contractors now obtaining can perhaps be given than that of Henry D. Denison for the enlargement of the Erie Canal from Port Schuyler to Lower Mohawk Aqueduct. Mr. Denison is a member of the well-known clique of J. J. Belden & Co., canal contractors, and the contract is virtually that of the clique; for it is the custom for individual members of such firms to take out contracts for the firm in this way, as well as for contractors to take out contracts in the name of one of their employees or "straw" men. Mr. Denison is a Democrat, Mr. Belden is a Republican; and in this way it is that the Canal Ring balances its politics—much more evenly than it does its bids! Mr. Belden of this firm is a relative by marriage of Alexander S. Page, as well as Mr. Page's assignee in bankruptcy, neither of which facts reflects much credit on Speaker McGinnis's appointment of Mr. Page as Chairman of the Canal Committee. Mr. Page, it ought to be said in justice to him, has an excellent personal reputation, but no man holding such intimate relations with leading contractors can properly be placed at the head of the Canal Committee. This contract was awarded in 1873, to be completed in 1875, and is still in progress. The following is the contract as it was awarded:

Quantity.	Measure.	Item.	Price.	Measure.	Amount.
4,000	Cubic Yards	Excavation of Earth	\$1,000 00	10,000	00
1,000	Cubic Yards	Excavation of Rock	2,000 00	2,000	00
500	Cubic Yards	Excavation of Rock not Blasted	2 00	Per Cubic Yard	1,000 00
1,100	Cubic Yards	Embankment	80 00	Per Cubic Yard	880 00
7,500	Cubic Yards	Lining	45 00	Per Cubic Yard	3,375 00
15,000	Cubic Yards	Padding with	50 00	Per Cubic Yard	7,500 00
100	Cubic Yards	Slope and Pavement Wall	35 00	Per Cubic Yard	3,500 00
5,000	Cubic Yards	Vertical Wall, dry	4 00	Per Cubic Yard	20,000 00
100,000	Feet B. M.	White Oak Timber, Boards, etc.	25 00	Per M. Foot	2,500 00
48,800	Feet B. M.	Headlock Timber	8 00	Per M. Foot	3,904 00
2,800	Pounds	Spikes and Nails	60 00	Per Pound	168 00
Total amount at which this contract was awarded.			\$74,153 40		

The quantities of work estimated as done, and the amounts paid or owing to the Contractor therefor, Feb. 1, 1875, were as follows:

Quantity.	Measure.	Item.	Price.	Measure.	Amount.
100,119	Cubic Yards	Excavation of Earth	\$1,000 00	27,270	75
46,554	Cubic Yards	Excavation of Rock	2 00	Per Cubic Yard	93,108 00
75,000	Cubic Yards	Embankment	80 00	Per Cubic Yard	6,000 00
26,230	Cubic Yards	Lining	45 00	Per Cubic Yard	11,804 50
8,314	Cubic Yards	Padding	50 00	Per Cubic Yard	4,157 00
45,079	Cubic Yards	Slope and Pavement Wall	35 00	Per Cubic Yard	1,577 76
22,800	Feet B. M.	Vertical Wall, dry	4 00	Per Cubic Yard	912 00
60,000	Feet B. M.	White Oak Timber, Boards, etc.	25 00	Per M. Foot	1,500 00
2,827	Pounds	Spikes and Nails	60 00	Per Pound	169 62
Total.			\$276,359 87		

Quantity.	Measure.	Item.	Price.	Measure.	Amount.
13,233	Cubic Yards	Vertical Wall (in cement)	3 00	Per Cubic Yard	39,699 00
4,500	Feet B. M.	Picking Pine	25 00	Per M. Foot	112,500 00
78,500	Pounds	Wrought Iron	12 00	Per Pound	942 00
1,700	Pounds	Cast Iron	10 00	Per Pound	17 00
345,522	Feet B. M.	Ducking Pine	30 00	Per M. Foot	10,365 66
1,549	Cubic Yards	Loose Stone	2 00	Per Cubic Yard	3,098 00
5,586	Feet B. M.	Fine Timber	35 00	Per M. Foot	196 01
10	Days	Carpenter Labor	30 00	Per Day	30 00
164	Lin. Feet	Coping	3 00	Per Lin. Foot	492 00

Quantity.	Measure.	Item.	Price.	Measure.	Amount.
1,800	Cubic Yards	Stone for Vertical Wall	3 00	Per Cubic Yard	5,400 00
1,200	Feet B. M.	Pine Docking	15 00	Per M. Foot	1,800 00
Total estimate to Jan. 1, 1875.			\$436,941 80		
February estimate.			21,172 83		

Total estimate to Feb. 1, 1875.

\$458,114 73

As a specimen contract this will bear a somewhat extended analysis. Instead of 40,000 cubic yards of excavation of earth as agreed upon, the contractor has done or claims to have done 100,000 yards; instead of 1,000 yards of excavation of rock, he has been paid for 67,631; instead of 7,500 yards of lining, he has been paid for 36,000; instead of 100 yards of padding, he has been paid for 8,314. Fourteen thousand yards of slope and pavement wall were bid for at 35 cents